



Connecticut Chapter
645 Farmington Ave.
Hartford, Connecticut 06105
www.connecticut.sierraclub.org

Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Appropriations Committee
March 11, 2010

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative and Political Chair for the Sierra Club Connecticut Chapter. I have been a campaign treasurer for a state representative since 2000.

The Citizen's Election Fund

The Public Campaign Financing law passed in 2005 was landmark legislation. It established Connecticut as the national leader in clean elections. It had its statewide debut in the 2008 election. Almost 80% of candidates chose to participate. The Program was an unqualified success. It clearly set Connecticut on the path of electing a government accountable only to the electorate.

As a citizen and a voter, as a legislative advocate, and as an experienced treasurer, I declare that maintaining this Program is my most important priority. Many legislators have told me that the bottle bill expansion and bisphenol-A phase out passed in 2009 would not have happened without the Program.

The program faces two challenges this year. One, of course, is the constitutional challenge in the *Green Party vs Garfield* court decision. I expect that the Government Administration and Elections Committee will soon vote a fix that problem.

The second problem, just as serious, is the effort to strip the program of its funding. It has already lost a considerable amount. The Governor's Deficit Mitigation proposal would strip an additional \$12 million from the fund.

I agree that amounts to candidates should be somewhat reduced. Our campaign returned about \$5,000, or 20%, of the \$25,000 grant in 2008. Grants to unopposed candidates should be minimal-perhaps enough to fund a single mailing. However, the trigger which matches non-participating candidate spending must be preserved-candidates will not participate without it.

The Program is financed, not by tax dollars, but by the sale of unclaimed goods by the state.

I am concerned that, before these changes are adopted, funding will be reduced to the point that the Program cannot operate.

Therefore, I ask that the \$12 million cut requested by the Governor be rejected at this time.

The Sierra Club has issued a statement about the importance of the Program. It reads:

The undersigned organizations, who in furtherance of their mission depend on a fair and effective legislature accountable only to the electorate, declare:

- Public Campaign Financing decreases the possibility of corruption by elected officials
- Public Campaign Financing allows candidates to focus on issues and problem solving, not fund-raising

- Public Campaign Financing ensures that elections are not dominated by special interest money
- Public Campaign Financing has shown promise in broadening the pool of diverse and qualified candidates for office
- Public Campaign Financing encourages legislators to vote on bills based on their merits rather than the source of campaign contributions
- Public Campaign Financing is necessary to enable the legislature to act fairly and appropriately on legislative initiatives which are in the public interest
- Public Campaign Financing generates public faith in the political process
- Public Campaign Financing is an investment in the functioning of a healthy democracy

The Community Investment Act

The CIA has been remarkably successful in helping to maintain Connecticut's quality of life. In the words of a Hartford Courant editorial:

"No program has done as much as this one to preserve the state's scenic and environmental character. With prices low, now is the time to acquire important parcels of land and to preserve significant historic structures. The act's grants are vital to increasing agriculture in the state, and public policy should support locally grown food." (12/12/2009)

CIA funds:

- Create jobs
- Leverage additional public and private investments
- Generate tax revenue
- Revitalize urban communities
- Protect farms, forestland and open space
- Are the backbone of land preservation
- Create affordable housing
- Supports the future of Connecticut's dairy industry
- Foster a coordinated approach to addressing Connecticut's land use needs

Sierra requests that the proposed transfer of \$5 million from the CIA be denied.